

18<sup>th</sup> July 2026

## PRESS RELEASE: NCPC Bulletin on IMD World Competitiveness Rankings 2026

Today (18th July), Prof. Alan Barrett, the Chair of the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council (NCPC), issued the Council's bulletin on the 2026 IMD World Competitiveness Rankings.

This year's IMD report ranks Ireland as the most competitive country in the euro area and the 7th most competitive economy in the world (out of 70 economies), maintaining its 2025 ranking.

The IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook assesses and ranks 70 economies around the world based on their ability to create and maintain a competitive business environment.

The rankings are based on more than 262 indicators grouped across four pillars: Economic Performance, Government Efficiency, Business Efficiency, and Infrastructure. Its competitive metrics are based on a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data.

Ireland improved across almost all competitiveness trends, particularly under Business Efficiency where our position increased from 11<sup>th</sup> in 2025 to 5<sup>th</sup> in 2026, and Economic performance where our ranking increased from 9<sup>th</sup> in 2025 to 2<sup>nd</sup> in 2026, mainly because of an increase in ranking associated with the Domestic Economy.

Ireland's ranking for Infrastructure worsened from 17<sup>th</sup> in 2025 to 19<sup>th</sup> in 2026, whereas Government Efficiency remained stable at 5<sup>th</sup> place for 2025 and 2026.

The competitive strengths which Ireland has developed – including its skilled workforce, business-friendly environment, and strong institutions offering stability – continue to serve us well. In the context of an exceptionally challenging global economic and political backdrop, Ireland will have to continue to harness these strengths to compete, while seeking to address identified areas of weakness. The Action Plan for Competitiveness and Productivity, which was published in September 2025 addresses these challenges, as will the forthcoming report on the Cost of Doing Business in Ireland.

Prof. Barrett said: *“Ireland continues to perform strongly, as reflected in our position as the most competitive economy in the euro zone area and 7th globally. Amid a challenging global trading environment, rising costs, and energy pressures, we must continue to build on our existing strengths while taking decisive action to address areas of weakness. The recently published Action Plan for Competitiveness and Productivity provide a timely and structured response, setting out targeted measures to enhance resilience, tackle existing weaknesses, and build on our core competitive advantages for the future”.*